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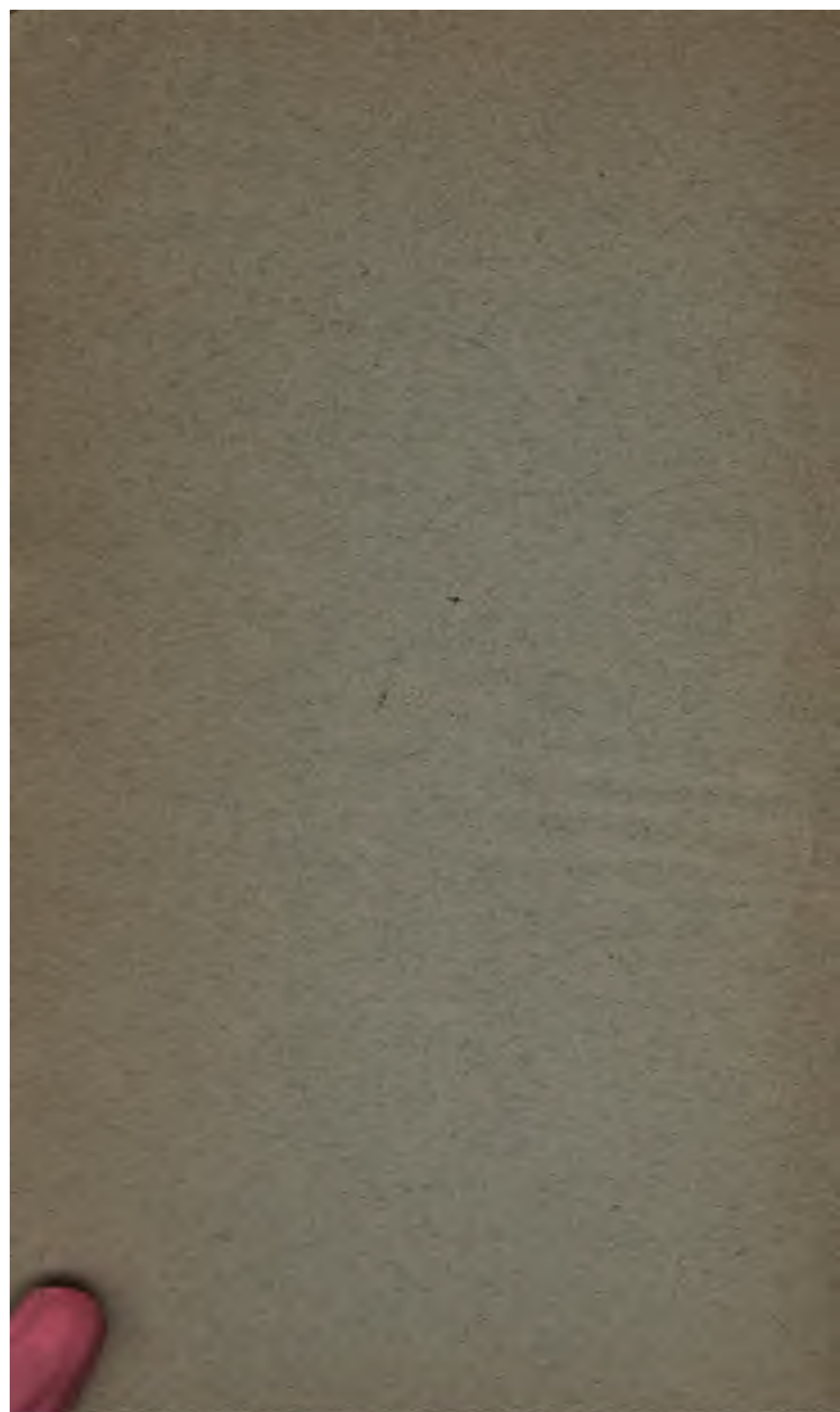
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INTEREST AS RELATED TO WILL

BY

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# INTEREST IN RELATION TO TRAINING OF THE WILL.

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DR. JOHN DEWEY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THERE is much the same difficulty in isolating any educational topic for discussion that there is in the case of philosophy. The issues are so interdependent that any one of them can be selected only at the risk of ignoring important considerations, or else of begging the question by bringing in the very problem under discussion in the guise of some other subject. Yet limits of time and space require that some one field be entered and occupied by itself. Under such circumstances about all one can do is to pursue a method which shall at least call attention to the problems involved, and to indicate the main relations of the matters discussed to relevant topics. The difficulty is particularly great in the discussion of interest. Interest is in the closest relation to the emotional life, on one side; and, through its close relation, if not identity, with attention, to the intellectual life, on the other side. Any adequate explanation of it, therefore, would require the development of the complete psychology both of feeling and of knowledge, and of their relations to each other, and the discussion of their connection or lack of connection with volition.

Accordingly, I can only hope to bring out what seem to me to be the salient points, and if my results do not command agreement, help at least define the problem for further discussion.

While it would be sanguine to anticipate agreement upon any important educational doctrine, there is perhaps more hope of reaching a working consensus by beginning with the educational side. If we can lay down some general principle regarding the place and function of interest in the school, we shall have a more or less sure basis from which to proceed to the psychological analysis of interest. At all events, we shall have limited the field and fixed the boundaries within which the psychological discussion may proceed. After this we shall proceed to the discussion of some of the chief attitudes assumed toward the problem of interest in historic and current investigations. Finally,

we may return with the results reached by this psychological and critical consideration to the educational matter with more definite emphasis upon the question of moral training.

### I.

At first sight the hope of gaining a working consensus regarding interest on the educational side seems futile. The first thing that strikes us is the profound contradiction in current educational ideas and standards regarding this matter of interest. On the one hand, we have the doctrine that interest is the keynote both of instruction and of moral training, that the essential problem of the teacher is to make the material presented so interesting that it shall command and retain attention. On the other hand, we have the assertion that the putting forth of effort from within is alone truly educative; that to rely upon the principle of interest is to distract the child intellectually and to weaken him morally.

Interest *vs.*  
Effort—An Educational Lawsuit.

In this educational lawsuit of interest *versus* effort let us consider the respective briefs of plaintiff and defendant. In behalf of interest it is claimed that it is the sole guarantee of attention; that, if we can secure interest in a given set of facts or ideas, we may be perfectly sure that the pupil will direct his energies toward mastering them; that, if we can secure interest in a certain moral train or line of conduct, we are equally safe in assuming that the child's activities are responding in that direction; that, if we have not secured interest, we have no safeguard as to what will be done in any given case. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of discipline has not succeeded. It is absurd to suppose that a child gets more intellectual or mental discipline when he goes at a matter unwillingly than when he goes at it with complete interest and out of the fullness of his heart. The theory of effort simply says that unwilling attention (doing something which is disagreeable and because it is disagreeable) should take precedence over spontaneous attention.

Practically the theory of effort amounts to nothing. When a child feels that his work is a task, it is only under compulsion that he gives himself to it. At the least let-up of external pressure we find his attention at once directed to what interests him. The child brought up on the basis of the theory of effort simply acquires marvelous skill in appearing to be occupied with an uninteresting subject, while the



real heart and core of his energies are otherwise engaged. Indeed, the theory contradicts itself. (It is psychologically impossible to call forth any activity without some interest.) The theory of effort simply substitutes one interest for another. It substitutes the impure interest of fear of the teacher or hope of future reward for pure interest in the material presented. The type of character induced is that illustrated by Emerson at the beginning of his essay on *Compensation*, where he holds up the current doctrine of compensation as virtually implying that, if you only sacrifice yourself enough now, you will be permitted to indulge yourself a great deal more in the future; or, if you are only good now (goodness consisting in attention to what is uninteresting) you will have, at some future time, a great many more pleasing interests — that is, may then be bad.

While the theory of effort is always holding up to us a strong, vigorous character as the outcome of its method of education, practically we do not get this character. We get either the narrow, bigoted man who is obstinate and irresponsible save in the line of his own preconceived aims and beliefs; or else we get a character dull, mechanical, unalert, because the vital juice of the principle of spontaneous interest has been squeezed out of it.

We may now hear the defendant's case. Life, says the other theory, is full of things not interesting, but which have to be faced none the less. Demands are continually made, situations have to be dealt with, which present no features of interest. Unless the individual has had previous training in devoting himself to uninteresting work, unless habits have been formed of attending to matters simply because they must be attended to, irrespective of the personal satisfaction gotten out of them, character will either break down, or avoid the issue, when confronted with the more serious matters of life. Life is too serious to be degraded to a merely pleasant affair, or reduced to the continual satisfaction of personal interests. The concerns of future life, therefore, imperatively demand such continual exercise of effort in the performance of tasks as to form the habit of recognizing the real labors of life. Anything else eats out the fiber of character and reduces the person to a wishy washy, colorless being; or else to a state of moral dependence, with over-reliance upon others and with continual demand for amusement and distraction.

Apart from the question of the future, continually to appeal even in childhood days to the principle of interest is eternally to excite,

that is, distract the child. Continuity of activity is destroyed. Everything is made play, amusement. This means over-stimulation; it means dissipation of energy. Will is never called into action at all. The reliance is upon external attractions and amusements. Everything is sugar-coated for the child, and he soon learns to turn from everything which is not artificially surrounded with diverting circumstances. The spoiled child who does only what he likes is the inevitable outcome of the theory of interest in education.

The theory is intellectually as well as morally harmful. Attention is never directed to the essential and important facts. It is directed simply to the wrappings of attraction with which the facts are surrounded. If a fact is repulsive or uninteresting, it has to be faced in its own naked character sooner or later. Putting a fringe of fictitious interest around it does not bring the child any nearer to it than he was at the outset. The fact that two and two make four is a naked fact which has to be mastered in and of itself. The child gets no greater hold upon the fact by having attached to it amusing stories of birds or dandelions than he would if the simple naked fact were presented to him. It is self-deception to suppose that the child is being interested in the numerical relation. His attention is going out to and taking in only the amusing images associated with this relation. The theory thus defeats its own end. It would be more direct and straightforward to recognize at the outset that certain facts have to be learned which have little or no interest, and that the only way to deal with these facts is through the power of effort, the internal power of putting forth activity wholly independent of any external inducement. Moreover, in this way the discipline, the habit of responding to serious matters, is formed which is necessary to equip the child for the life that lies ahead of him.

I have attempted to set forth the respective claims of each side as we find them, not only in current discussions, but in the old controversy, as old as Plato and Aristotle. A little reflection will convince one that the strong point in each argument is not so much what it says in its own behalf as in its attacks on the weak places of the opposite theory. Each theory is strong in its negations rather than in its position. It is a common, though somewhat surprising, fact that there is generally a common principle unconsciously assumed at the basis of two theories which to all outward appearances are the extreme opposites of each other. Such a common

The Verdict.



principle is presupposed by the theories of effort and interest in the one-sided forms in which they have already been stated.

This identical assumption is the externality of the object or idea to be mastered, the end to be reached, the act to be performed, to the self. It is because the object or end is assumed to be outside self that it has to be *made* interesting, that it has to be surrounded with artificial stimuli and with fictitious inducements to attention. It is equally because the object lies outside the sphere of self that the sheer power of "will," the putting forth of effort without interest, has to be appealed to. {The genuine principle of interest is the principle of the recognized identity of the fact or proposed line of action with the self; that it lies in the direction of the agent's own growth, and is, therefore, imperiously demanded, if the agent is to be himself.} Let this condition of identification once be secured, and we neither have to appeal to sheer strength of will, nor do we have to occupy ourselves with making things interesting to the child.

The theory of effort, as already stated, means a virtual division of attention and the corresponding disintegration of character, intellectually and morally. (The great fallacy of the so-called effort theory is that it identifies the exercise and training of will with certain external activities and certain external results.) It is supposed that, because a child is occupied at some outward task and because he succeeds in exhibiting the required product, that he is really putting forth will, and that definite intellectual and moral habits are in process of formation. But, as a matter of fact, the moral exercise of the will is not found in the external assumption of any posture, and the formation of moral habit cannot be identified with the ability to show up results at the demand of another. The exercise of the will is manifest in the direction of attention, and depends upon the spirit, the motive, the disposition in which work is carried on.

A child may be externally entirely occupied with mastering the multiplication table, and be able to reproduce that table when asked to do so by his teacher. The teacher may congratulate himself that the child has been so exercising his will power as to be forming right intellectual and moral habits. Not so, unless moral habit be identified with this ability to show certain results when required. The question of moral training has not been touched until we know what the child has been internally occupied with, what the predominating direction of his attention, his feelings, his disposition has been while engaged upon this task.

U. S. M.

If the task has appealed to him merely as a task, it is as certain, psychologically, as the law of action and reaction is, physically, that the child is simply engaged in acquiring the habit of divided attention; that he is getting the ability to direct eye and ear, lips and mouth, to what is present before him in such a way as to impress those things upon his memory, while at the same time getting his mental imagery free to work upon matters of real interest to him.

No account of the actual moral training secured is adequate unless it recognizes this division of attention into which the child is being educated, and faces the question of what the moral worth of such a division may be. {External mechanical attention to a task conceived as a task is the inevitable correlate of an internal random mind-wandering along the lines of the pleasurable.}

The spontaneous power of the child, his demand for realization of his own impulses, cannot by any possibility be suppressed. If the external conditions are such that the child cannot put his spontaneous activity into the work to be done, if he finds that he cannot express himself in that, he learns in a most miraculous way the exact amount of attention that has to be given to this external material to satisfy the requirements of the teacher, while saving up the rest of his mental powers for following out lines of imagery that appeal to him. [I do not say that there is absolutely no moral training involved in forming these habits of external attention, but I do say that there is a question of moral import involved in the formation of the habits of internal inattention.]

While we are congratulating ourselves upon the well-disciplined habits which the pupil is acquiring, judged by his ability to reproduce a lesson when called upon, we forget to commiserate ourselves because the deeper intellectual and moral nature of the child has secured absolutely no discipline at all, but has been left to follow its own caprices, the disordered suggestions of the moment, or of past experience. I do not see how anyone can deny that the training of this internal imagery is at least equally important with the development of certain outward habits of action. For myself, when it comes to the mere moral question and not a question of practical convenience, I think it is infinitely more important. Nor do I see how anyone at all familiar with the great mass of existing school work can deny that the greater part of the pupils are gradually forming habits of divided attention. If the teacher is skillful and wide-awake, if she is what is termed a good disciplinarian, the child will indeed learn to keep his senses intent in certain ways, but he will

W. H. C.



also learn to direct the fruitful imagery, which constitutes the value of what is before his senses, in totally other directions. (It would not be wholly palatable to have to face the actual psychological condition of the majority of the pupils that leave our schools. We should find this division of attention and the resulting disintegration so great that we might cease teaching in sheer disgust.) None the less, it is well for us to recognize that this state of things exists, and that it is the inevitable outcome of those conditions which require the simulation of attention without requiring its essence.

The principle of making objects and ideas interesting implies the same divorce between object and self as does the theory of "effort."

**Making Things Interesting.** When things have to be *made* interesting, it is because interest itself is wanting. Moreover, the phrase is a mis-

nomer. The thing, the object, is no more interesting than it was before. The appeal is simply made to the child's love of pleasure. He is excited in a given direction, with the hope that somehow or other during this excitation he will assimilate something otherwise repulsive. There are two types of pleasure. One is the accompaniment of activity. It is found wherever there is self-expression. It is simply the internal realization of the outgoing energy. This sort of pleasure is always absorbed in the activity itself. It has no separate existence in consciousness. This is the type of pleasure found in legitimate interest. Its stimulus is found in the needs of the organism. The other sort of pleasure arises from contact. It marks receptivity. Its stimuli are external. We take interest; we get pleasure. The type of pleasure which arises from external stimulation is isolated. It exists by itself in consciousness as a pleasure, not as the pleasure of activity.

When objects are made interesting, it is this latter type of pleasure that comes into play. Advantage is taken of the fact that a certain amount of excitation of any organ is pleasurable. The pleasure arising is employed to cover the gap between self and some fact not in itself arousing interest.

[The result here also is division of energies. In the case of disagreeable effort the division is simultaneous. In this case it is successive.] Instead of having a mechanical, external activity

**Division of Energies.**

and a random internal activity at the same time, there is oscillation of excitement and apathy. The child alternates between periods of overstimulation and of inertness. It is a condition realized in some so-called kindergartens. Moreover, this

excitation of any particular organ, as eye or ear, by itself, creates an abiding demand for such stimulation. It is as possible to create an appetite on the part of the eye or the ear for pleasurable stimulation as it is on the part of the taste. Some kindergarten children are as dependent upon the recurrent presence of bright colors or agreeable sounds as the drunkard is upon his dram. It is this which accounts for the distraction and dissipation of energy so characteristic of such children, and for their dependence upon external suggestion.

Before attempting a more specific psychological analysis, the discussion up to this point may be summarized as follows: Genuine

**Summary.** interest in education is the accompaniment of the identification, through action, of the self with some object or idea, because of the necessity of that object or idea for the maintenance of self-expression. Effort, in the sense in which it may be opposed to interest, implies a separation between the self and the fact to be mastered or task to be performed, and sets up an habitual division of activities. Externally, we have mechanical habits with no psychical end or value. Internally, we have random energy or mind-wandering, a sequence of ideas with no end at all, because not brought to a focus in action. Interest, in the sense in which it is opposed to effort, means simply an excitation of the sense organ to give pleasure, resulting in strain on one side and listlessness on the other.

But when we recognize there are certain powers within the child urgent for development, needing to be acted upon, in order to secure their own due efficiency and discipline, we have a firm basis upon which to build. Effort arises normally in the attempt to give full operation, and thus growth and completion, to these powers. Adequately to act upon these impulses involves seriousness, absorption, definiteness of purpose, and results in formation of steadiness and persistent habit in the service of worthy ends. But this effort never degenerates into drudgery, or mere strain of dead lift, because interest abides—the self is concerned throughout.)

## II.

We come now to our second main topic, the psychology of interest. It should be obvious, from the preceding educational discussion, that

**The Psychology of Interest.** the points upon which we particularly need enlightenment are its relation to desire and pleasure on one side, to ideas and effort on the other.



I begin with a brief descriptive account of interest. Interest is first active, projective, or propulsive. We take interest. To be interested in any matter is to be actively concerned with it. The mere feeling regarding a subject may be static or inert, but interest is dynamic. Second, it is objective. We say a man has many interests to care for or look after. We talk about the range of a man's interests, his business interests, local interests, etc. We identify interests with concerns or affairs. Interest does not end simply in itself, as bare feelings may, but always has some object, end, or aim to which it attaches itself. Third, interest is subjective; it signifies an *internal* realization, or feeling, of worth. It has its emotional as well as its active and objective sides. Wherever there is interest there is response in the way of feeling.

These are the various meanings in which common sense employs the term interest. The root idea of the term seems to be that of being engaged, engrossed, or entirely taken up with some activity because of its recognized worth. The etymology of the term *inter-esse*, "to be between," points in the same direction. Interest marks the annihilation of the distance between the person and the materials and results of his action; it is the instrument which effects their organic union.<sup>1</sup>

We have now to deal more in detail with each of the three phases mentioned:

1. The active or propulsive phase of interest takes us back to the consideration of impulse and the spontaneous urgencies or tendencies of activity. There is no such thing as absolutely diffuse, impartial impulse. Impulse is always differentiated along some more or less specific channel. Impulse has its own special lines of discharge. The old puzzle about the ass between two bundles of hay is only too familiar, but the recognition of its fundamental fallacy is not so common. If the self were purely passive or purely indifferent, waiting upon stimulation from without, then

The Propulsive  
Phase of Interest.

<sup>1</sup> It is true that the term interest is also used in a definitely disparaging sense. We speak of interest as opposed to principle, of self-interest as a motive to action which regards only one's personal advantage; but these are neither the only nor the controlling senses in which the term is used. It may fairly be questioned whether this is anything but a narrowing or degrading of the legitimate sense of the term. However that may be, it appears to me certain that much of the controversy regarding the moral use of interest arises because one party is using the term in the larger, objective sense of recognized value or engrossing activity, while the other is using it as equivalent to selfish motive.

the self illustrated in this supposed example would remain forever helpless, starving to death, because of its equipoise between two sources of food. The error is in the supposition of this balanced internal condition. The self is always already doing something, intent on something urgent. And this ongoing activity always gives it a bent in one direction rather than another. The ass, in other words, is always already moving toward one bundle rather than the other. No amount of physical cross-eyedness could induce such psychical cross-eyedness that the animal would be in a condition of equal stimulation from both sides.

In this primitive condition of spontaneous, impulsive activity we have the basis for natural interest. Interest is no more passively waiting around to be excited from the outside than is impulse. In the selective or preferential quality of impulse we have the basis of the fact that at any given time, if we are psychically awake at all, we are always interested in one direction rather than another. The condition of total lack of interest, or of absolutely impartially distributed interest, is as mythical as the story of the ass in scholastic ethics.

An equally great fallacy is the oft-made assumption of some chasm between impulse and the self. Impulse is spoken of as if it were a force swaying the self in this direction or that; as if the self were an indifferent, passive something waiting to be moved by the pressure of impulse; in reality, impulse is simply the impetus or outgoing of the self in one direction or other. This point is mentioned now because the connection of impulse and interest is so close that any assumption at this point of impulse as external to self is sure to manifest itself later on in the assumption that interest is of the nature of an external inducement or attraction to self, instead of being an absorption of the activities of the self in the object that allows these activities to function.

2. The objective side of interest. Every interest, as already said, attaches itself to an object. The artist is interested in his brushes, in his colors, in his technique. The business man is interested in the play of supply and demand, in the movement of markets, etc. Take whatever instance of interest we choose, and we shall find that, if we cut out the factor of the object about which interest clusters, interest itself disappears, relapsing into mere subjective feeling.

Error begins in supposing the object already there, and then call-

The Objective  
Side of Interest.



ing the activity into being. Canvas, brushes, and paints interest the artist, for example, only because they help him find his existing artistic capacity. There is nothing in a wheel and a piece of string to arouse a child's activity save as they stimulate some instinct or impulse already active, and supply it with the means of its execution. The number twelve is uninteresting when it is a bare, external fact; it has interest (just as has the top or wheelbarrow or toy locomotive) when it presents itself as an instrument of carrying into effect some dawning energy or desire — making a box, measuring one's height, etc. And in its difference of degree exactly the same principle holds of the most technical items of scientific or historic knowledge — whatever furthers one, helps mental movement, is of necessary and intrinsic interest.

3. We now come to the emotional phase. Value is not only objective, but subjective. That is, there is not only the thing which is projected as valuable or worth while, but there is also the feeling of its worth. It is, of course, impossible to define feeling. We can only say that it is the purely important, individual consciousness of worth, and recognize that wherever we have interest there we have internal realization of value.

The gist of the psychology of interest may, accordingly, be stated as follows: An interest is primarily a form of self-expressive activity — that is, of growth through acting upon nascent tendencies. If we examine this activity on the side of the content of expression, of what is done, we get its objective features, the ideas, objects, etc., to which the interest is attached, about which it clusters. If we take into account that it is self-expression, that self finds itself, is reflected back to itself, in this content, we get its emotional or feeling side. Any account of genuine interest must, therefore, grasp it as outgoing activity holding within its grasp an intellectual content, and reflecting itself in felt value.

There are cases where self-expression is direct and immediate. It puts itself forth with no thought of anything beyond. The present activity is the only ultimate in consciousness. It satisfies in and of itself. The end is the present activity, and so there is no gap in space nor time between means and end. All play is of this immediate character. All purely æsthetic appreciation approximates this type. The existing experience holds us for its own sake, and we do not demand of it that it takes us into something beyond itself. With the child and his ball,

Emotional Phase  
of Interest.

Mediate vs. Im-  
mediate Interest—  
Work vs. Drudg-  
ery.

the amateur and the hearing of a symphony, the immediate engrosses. Its value is there, and is there in what is directly present.

We may, if we choose, say that the interest is in the object present to the senses, but we must beware how we interpret this saying. The object has no conscious existence, at the time, save *in* the activity. The ball to the child is his game, his game is his ball. The music has no existence save in the rapt hearing of the music—so long as the interest is immediate or æsthetic. It is frequently said to be the object which attracts attention, which calls forth interest to itself by its own inherent qualities. But this is a psychological impossibility. The bright color, the sweet sound, that interest the child are themselves phases of his organic activity. To say the child attends to the color does not mean that he gives himself up to an external object, but rather that he continues the activity which results in the presence of the color. His own activity so engrosses him that he endeavors to maintain it.

On the other hand, we have cases of indirect, transferred, or, technically, mediated interest. That is, things indifferent or even repulsive in themselves often become of interest because of their assuming relationships and connections of which we are previously unaware. Many a student, of so-called practical make-up, has found mathematical theory, once repellant, lit up by great attractiveness when he studied some form of engineering in which this theory was a necessary tool. The musical score and the technique of fingering, in which the child can find no interest when it is presented as an end in itself, when it is isolated, becomes fascinating when the child realizes its place and bearings in helping him give better and fuller utterance to his love of song. (It is all a question of relationship, whether it appeals or fails to appeal; and while the little child takes only a near view of things, as he grows he becomes capable of extending his range, and seeing an act, or a thing, or a fact, not by itself, but in its value as part of a larger whole. If this whole belongs to him, if it is a mode of his own movement, then the particular gains interest too.)

Here, and here only, we have the reality of the idea of "making things interesting." I know of no more demoralizing doctrine—when taken literally—than the assertion of some of the opponents of interest that *after* subject-matter has been selected, *then* the teacher should make it interesting. This combines in itself two thoroughgoing errors. On one side, it makes the selection of subject-matter a matter quite inde-



pendent of the question of interest—and thus of the child's own native urgencies and needs; and, further, it reduces method in teaching to more or less external and artificial devices for dressing up the unrelated materials, so that it will get some hold upon attention. In reality, the principle of "making things interesting" means that subjects shall be selected in relation to the child's present experience, powers, and needs; and that (in case he does not perceive or appreciate this relevancy) the teacher shall present the new material in such a way as to enable the child to appreciate its bearings, its relationships, its necessity for him. It is *this bringing of the child to consciousness in new material* which constitutes the reality of what is so often perverted, both by friend and foe, in the idea of "making things interesting."

In other words, the problem is one of the degree of intrinsic connection furnished as a motive for attention. The teacher who tells the child he will be kept after school if he doesn't recite his geography lesson better<sup>1</sup> is appealing to the psychology of mediate interest. The former English method of rapping knuckles for false Latin quantities is one way of arousing interest in the intricacies of Latin. To offer a child a bribe, or a promise of teacher's affection, or promotion to the next grade, or ability to make money, or to take a position in society, are other modes. They are cases of transferred interest. But the criterion of judging them lies just here: How far is one interest externally attached to another, or substituted for another? How far does the new appeal, the new motive, serve to interpret, to bring out, to *relate* the material otherwise without interest? It is a question, again, of *inter-esse*, of interaction. The problem may be stated as one of the relations of means and end. Anything indifferent or repellant becomes of interest when seen as a means to an end already related to self, or as an end which will allow means already at command to secure further movement and outlet. But, in normal growth, the interest in one is not simply externally tied on to the other; it suffuses, saturates, and thus transforms it. It interprets or revalues it—gives it a new significance in consciousness. The man who has a wife and family has thereby a new motive for his daily work—he sees a new meaning in it, and takes into it a steadiness and enthusiasm pre-

<sup>1</sup> I have it argued in all seriousness that a child kept after school to study has often got an interest in arithmetic or grammar which he didn't have before, as if this proved the efficacy of "discipline" *vs.* interest. Of course, the reality is that the greater leisure, the opportunity for individual explanation afforded, served to bring the material into its proper relations in the child's mind—he "got a hold" of it.



viously lacking. But if he does his day's work as a thing intrinsically disagreeable, as drudgery, simply for the sake of the final wage-reward, the case is quite different. Means and end remain remote; they do not permeate one another. The person is no more really interested in his work than he was before; it, in itself, is a hardship to be escaped from. Hence he cannot give full attention to it; he cannot put himself unreservedly into it. But to the other man every stroke of work may mean literally his wife and baby. Externally, physically, they are remote; mentally, in consciousness, they are one; they have the same value. But in drudgery means and end remain as separate in consciousness as they are in space and time. What is true of this is true of every attempt in teaching to "create interest" by appeal to external motives.

At the opposite scale, take a case of artistic construction. The sculptor has his end, his ideal, in view. To realize that end he must go through a series of intervening steps which are not, on the face of it, equivalent to the end. He must model and mold and chisel in a series of particular acts, no one of which is the beautiful form he has in mind, and every one of which represents the putting forth of personal energy on his own part. But because these are to him necessary means for the end, the ideal, the finished form is completely transferred over into these special acts. Each molding of the clay, each stroke of the chisel, is for him at the time the whole end in process of realization. Whatever interest or value attaches to the end attaches to each of these steps. He is as much absorbed in one as in the other. Any failure in this complete identification means an inartistic product, means that he is not really interested in his ideal. A genuine interest in the ideal indicates of necessity an equal interest in all the conditions of its expression.

We are now in position to deal with the question of the relation of interest to desire and to effort. Desire and effort in their legitimate meaning are, both of them, phases of mediated interest. They are correlatives, not opposites. Both effort and desire exist only when the end is somewhat remote.

When energy is put forth purely for its own sake, there is no question of effort and equally no question of desire. Effort and desire both imply a state of tension. There is a certain amount of opposition existing between the ideal in view and the present actual state of things. We call it effort when we are thinking of the necessity of a

Relation of Interest to Desire and Effort.

thought of the steps he has to perform. The means, once more, have been identified with the end; the desire has become mediate interest. The ideal dies as bare ideal, to live again in instrumental powers.

So far we have been discussing the process of mediated self-expression from the standpoint of the means. We have now to consider the same process, throwing the emphasis of intellectual analysis on the side of the end. Because of the length of the foregoing discussion we may here briefly consider the end or ideal, on the sides, respectively, of its origin and its function.

**Analysis of Ends.**

First, its origin. The ideal is normally a projection of the active powers. It is not generated in a vacuum nor introduced into the mind from outside impulses and habits actually striving for expression. It is simply these active powers getting off and looking at themselves to see what they are like; to see what they are upon the whole, permanently, in their final bearings, and not simply as they are at the moment and in their relative isolation. The ideal, in other words, is the self-consciousness of the impulse. It is its self-interpretation; its value in terms of possible realization.

Second, hence its function. If the ideal had its genesis independent of the active powers, it is impossible to see how it could ever get to work. The psychical machinery by which it should cease to be barely an ideal, and become an actuality, would be wanting. But just because the ideal is normally the projection of the active powers into intellectual terms, the ideal inevitably possesses active quality. This dynamic factor is present to stay. Its appearance as motive is not anything different in kind from its appearance as ideal. Motivation is just the realization of the active value originally attaching to it.

In other words, when the ideal has the function of motive (a power inducing to activity), we have precisely the same fact, viewed from the standpoint of the end, that we have just now considered

**Conflict of Ideals.**

as the passing over of desire into mediate interest when viewing it from the side of the means. {So long as the ideal does not become a motive, it indicates that the ideal itself is not yet definitely formed. There is conflict of ideals.} The agent has two possible ends before him, one corresponding to one set of his active powers, and another to another set of impulses or habits. Thought, reflection, is not focused, accordingly, in any single direction. The self has not yet found itself. It does not know what it really wants. It is in process of tentative self-expression, first trying on one self and then another to



see how they fit. The attainment of a single purpose or the defining of one final ideal indicates the self has found its unity of expression. At this exact point the ideal, having no longer any opposition to hold it back, begins to show itself in overt action. The ideal has become a motive. The interest in the end is now taken over into the impulses and habits, and they become the present ends. Motive is the interest in the ideal mediated into impulse and habit.

Normal effort is precisely this self-realizing tendency of the ideal — its struggle to pass over into motive. The empty or formal ideal is the end which is not suggested by, or does not grow out of, the agent's active powers. Lacking any dynamic qualities, it does not assert itself; it does not become a motor, a motive. But whenever the ideal is really a projection or translation of self-expression, it must strive to assert itself. It must persist through obstacles, and endeavor to transform obstacles into means of its own realization. The degree of its persistency simply marks the extent to which it is in reality, and not simply in name, a true ideal or conceived form of self-expression.

The matter of good intentions or "meaning well" affords a good illustration of this principle. When a person who has outwardly failed in his duty offers his good intentions as a justification or palliation of conduct, what determines whether or no his excuse shall be accepted? Is it not precisely whether he can or not show effort on the part of his intention, his ideal, to realize itself, and can show obstacles intervening from without which have prevented its expression up to the point of overt realization? If he cannot show overwhelming interference from without, we have a right to conclude either that the agent is attempting to deceive us or else is self-deceived—that his so-called good intention was in reality but a vague sentimental wish or else a second-handed reference to some conventional ideal which had no real hold upon him. We always use the persistence of an end against obstacles as a test of its vitality, its genuineness.

On the other hand, effort, in the sense of strain because of lack in interest, is evidence of the abnormal use of effort. The necessity of effort in this sense indicates that the end nominally held up is not recognized as a form of self-expression—that it is external to the self and hence fails in interest. The *conscious* stirring up of effort marks simply the unreal strain necessarily involved in any attempt to reach an end which is not part and parcel of the self's

Meaning of Normal Effort.

Effort as Strain.

own process. The strain is always artificial; it requires external stimulation of some sort or other to keep it going, and always leads to exhaustion. Not only does effort in its true sense play no part in moral training, but it plays a distinctly immoral part. The externality of the end, as witnessed in its failure to arouse the active impulses and to persist toward its own realization, makes it impossible that any strain to attain this end should have any other than a relatively immoral motive. Only selfish fear, the dread of some external power, or else purely mechanical habit, or else the hope of some external reward, some more or less subtle form of bribery, can be really a motive in any such instance.

We thus see how the theories of pleasure as a motive and artificial effort as a motive have the same practical outcome. The theory of strain always involves some reference to either pleasure or pain as the real controlling motive. And the theory of pleasure, because of its lack of an intrinsic end which holds and directs the powers, has continually to fall back upon some external inducement to excite the flagging powers. It is a commonplace in morals that no one puts forth more effort with less avail than the habitual seeker after pleasure.

The outcome of our psychological analysis is thus identical with the results reached by consideration of the practical educational side. There we found that the appeal to making things interesting, to stirring up pleasure in things not of themselves interesting, leads as a matter of common experience to alternation of overstimulation and dull apathy. Here we find that the desire for pleasure as an end leads necessarily to the stirring up of energies uselessly on one side, and the undirected, wasteful expenditure of energies on the other.

On the educational side we saw that the appeal to the sheer force of "will," so-called, apart from any interest in the object, means the formation of habits of divided attention—the mechanical doing of certain things in a purely external way on the one side, and the riotous, uncontrolled play of imagery on the other. (On the psychological side we find that interest in an end or object simply means that the self is finding its own movement or outlet in a certain direction, and that consequently there is a motive for effort, for putting forth energy, in realizing the desirable end.)

On the educational side we were led to assume that normal interest and effort are identical with the process of self-expression. We have



now through the process of mediated self-expression secured a fairly adequate psychological justification for that practical postulate of education.

### III.

Current discussions as to the relation of interest to moral training have centered largely about the relative merits of the Kantian and Herbartian theories of desire and will. So far as I can see, as between the two theories, it is a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. Judged by the outcome of the previous discussion, neither theory has an adequate conception either of interest or of moral volition.

**Kantian *vs.* Herbartian Theories of Desire and Will.**

The criticisms of the Kantian theory have been so thoroughly worked out by Hegel and Schleiermacher, in Germany, and recently by Bradley, Green, and Caird, in England, that we need here give only a very brief summary. Kant holds that the sole end or object of desire is pleasure; that desire, in other words, is always self-seeking in the bad sense of that term. The end set up by desire must, therefore, be excluded from any share in moral motivation. The agent must take the moral law, the end laid down by reason, not only as his end, but also as his motive. But all special ends are excluded from the end of reason, because they are empirical and not adequate to the necessity and universality of reason. Reason thus becomes purely formal. It is empty, having no content.

It should hardly be necessary to dwell upon the inadequacy of a theory which excludes all specific concrete ends from forming the content of the moral motive. Such a theory would have, as its practical outcome, only the deification of mere good intentions on one side, or else the setting up of hard and fixed rules on the other. The inefficiency of such a theory for the purpose of the educator also goes without saying. It is not the work of the educator of children to fix their attention upon abstract morality or to induce them to act with the formal law of duty as their controlling motive. It is rather his business to get the children to realize what the general abstract demands of morality require in very special and concrete instances, and to give them such an interest in these specific moral ends as will endow them with motor power. Kant's theory absolutely fails to supply any guidance as to method in this respect. The teacher who attempted to work by it would inevitably, so far as he influenced pupils at all, make them into

either sentimentalists or prigs. He would make them self-conscious in the bad sense of that term—concerned, that is to say, with their own attitude toward morality rather than with conduct itself.

One or two points in Kant's psychology are, however, perhaps worth remark. On the one hand we have his assumption that the whole impulsive, appetitive desiring nature of man works toward moral evil, is selfish. The dualism between sense and reason, which is the essence of his theory of knowledge, reappears also in his critique of will. The self is split in two. It has one phase which is only particular, and another phase which is merely universal. All this is assumption without justification from either the biological, or psychological, or the logical point of view. Biologically, impulse and appetite represent, not a striving for pleasure, but a striving to maintain and further the life process. Psychologically, impulse is always a means, an instrument, for realizing an end. Pleasure arrives, not as its animating and intended aim, but as an accompaniment of the putting forth of activity. Logically, the particular has to be conceived as one specified mode of activity of an organic whole; the universal as the principle which organizes particulars into the unified whole.

Moreover, when we take the particular kind of interest which Kant does finally admit, its inadequacy to the needs of the educator is glaring. Reverence for the moral law is the one form of emotion which Kant admits. But this interest is of necessity a late one in the process of development. Observation, both of the race and of the individual, justifies this statement. Given a moral character already formed, an appeal to this interest undoubtedly has value—especially in critical periods of moral stress; for it may be questioned whether in the great mass of the acts even of the mature character it would be advisable to bring in distinct consciousness of moral law, rather than to trust to the value lying in the ends themselves. But the problem for the educator is not how to reach the formed character in which reverence for the moral law as such has any meaning. The problem for him is how to utilize present interests and special ends so that there may grow out of them in due time such a sense of law and of the claims of law as to hold and reinforce character in critical periods of temptation.

We find the Herbartian claiming the following things: First, interest is psychical activity. It is an inner animation of the self, a stirring up of the self. In the satisfaction of interest, pleasure is felt and men-



tal ease of operation is furthered. Second, it is attached to the object for its own sake, and not because of what the object may do in serving further ends. Genuine interest, according to the Herbartians, is always immediate; absorbed, that is, in the value of the object. It is involuntary — that is, precedes, and is independent of, the awakening of any desire. Mediate interest is what is usually termed an impure interest, attaching not to the object for its own sake, but for its usefulness in reaching more remote ends of pleasure or of success. Third, interest is the means by which certain ideas and certain connections between ideas can be so established and reinforced as to become practically influential in directing the child's conduct.

All this seems to me sound educational sense. Make allowance for the different use of the terms immediate and mediate interest, and it agrees substantially with the analysis already given. But when we go to the psychology of interest, we find an account which not only does not justify previous statements, but actually contradicts them.

According to this psychological view, interest is not psychical activity, but is a product of the actions and reactions of ideas. Interest is simply one case of feeling, and all the feeling depends upon the mechanism of ideas. In his desire to get rid of the "faculty" psychology, Herbart denies any original or primitive character to either impulse or feeling. Interest from this point of view is an outcome, a result only. It may be said to be the end of education, but it cannot possibly be a means, a motive. Instead of directing ideas, it is their passive reflex.

When some idea (*Vorstellung*) is crowded below, or down toward, the threshold of consciousness, it strains against the counteracting ideas. The idea, having no force *per se*, becomes a force through pressure, and through the resistance of self-preservation it exerts against such pressure. In this forward and backward striving of the ideas some ideas fuse; the new and the old join hands. This fusion (the essence of apperception) gives a certain pleasure, the sense of ease. Hence a peculiar kind of feeling, known as interest. The demand, not for any special *Vorstellung*, but for the repetition of the apperceptive process, for the repetition of this junction between new and old (because of its peculiar pleasure?), is interest. It is the need to occupy itself further with the same activity.

In other words, interest is attached in no sense to the *content* of the ideas, aiming at appreciating their intrinsic values, but depends wholly



on the formal interaction of the ideas ; it accompanies the apperceptive process as such, independently of the particular set of ideas apperceived.

The weakness both of Herbartian psychology and pedagogy seems to me to lie just here—in giving the idea a sort of external existence, a ready-made character, an existence and a content not dependent upon previous individual activity. It abstracts the idea from impulses and the activity that results from them, just as does the Kantian theory. The Kantian ideas have the advantage on the side of scope, of comprehensiveness ; the Herbartian *Vorstellungen* have it on the side of definiteness, of immediate availability. But both doctrines fail to recognize the genesis of the ideas, the conceived ends, out of concrete spontaneous action ; and equally fail to recognize their function as being the guides and directors of the instinctive tendencies to action.

Herbartianism seems to me essentially a schoolmaster's psychology, not the psychology of a child. It is the natural expression of a nation laying great emphasis upon authority and upon the formation of individual character in distinct and recognized subordination to the ethical demands made in war and in civil administration by that authority. It is not the psychology of a nation which professes to believe that every individual has within him the principle of authority, and that order means coördination, not subordination. It would be folly not to recognize to the full all the Herbartians say about the moral importance of forming certain ideas and certain relationships among ideas, and the extent to which character may be formed or disintegrated through the right and wrong use of the intellectual side of instruction in both its form and content. But just as our psychology shows us that ideas arise as the definition of activity, and serve to direct that activity in new expressions, so we need a pedagogy which shall lay more emphasis upon securing in the school the conditions of direct experience and the gradual evolution of ideas in and through the constructive activities ; for it is the extent in which any idea is a projection of natural tendencies that measures its weight, its motor power, its interest.

We are not bound up to the one-sidedness of either Kant or Herbart, on the historical, any more than on the psychological, side. We may go back to Plato and Aristotle, with their assertion that "the particular training in respect to pleasure and pain which leads one to take pleasure in, to love, what demands love, and to feel pain in, to hate,

what deserves hate, is education." Or we may go ahead to Hegel, who could say that the "actual rationality of heart and will can only be at home in the universality of intellect," and yet write as follows: "The impulses and inclinations are sometimes contrasted, quite to their disadvantage, with the morality of duty for duty's sake. But impulse and passion are the very life blood of all action; they are necessary if the individual is to be really concerned in his end and its execution. The aim, the ideal, with which 'morality' has to do is, as such, bare content, the universal—an inactive thing. It finds its actualizing in the agent, finds it only when the aim is immanent in the agent, is his *interest*, and—should it claim to engross his whole efficient subjectivity—his passion."

#### IV.

It only remains briefly to summarize from the educational side the whole discussion.

#### INTEREST IN RELATION TO THE TEACHER AND TO THE CHILD.

We are often told that the doctrine of interest in education means that the undeveloped, crude, and capricious capacity and insight of the child are substituted for the matured, trained, and wider outlook and experience of the adult. Our previous discussion should enable us to set this matter to rights. There are existing natural interests on the part of the child, due in part to the stage of development at which he is arrived, in part to his habits previously formed, and to his environment. These *are* relatively crude, uncertain, and transitory. Yet they are all there is, so to speak, to the child; they are all the teacher has to appeal to; they are the starting points, the initiatives, the working machinery. Does it follow that the teacher is to accept them as final; to take them as a standard; to appeal to them in the sense of arousing them to act for their own satisfaction just as they are? By no means. The teacher who thus interprets them is the only serious enemy the idea of interest really has. The significance of interest is in what *it leads to*; the new experiences it makes possible, the new powers it tends to *form*. The impulses and habits of the child must be *interpreted*. The value of the teacher is precisely that with wider knowledge and experience he may see them, not only as beginners, but also in their outcome, in their possibilities, that is, in their ideals. Here is Herbart's many-sided



Interest with its fivefold classification. Here is the interest of the child to talk about himself and his wonderful experiences, and his friends and their remarkable doings. What may it lead to? What is its possible outcome? Here is his interest in scribbling, in making houses and dogs and men. What does it *amount to, come to*? And so on to the end of the chapter. To answer such questions as these is not only to know the psychology of the child. It is to tax to the utmost the wisdom of the adult, knowledge of history, science, and the resources of art. Subject-matter, in all its refinements and comprehensiveness, is one name for the answer to the question: What shall these dawning powers amount to?

But it is a long road from the beginning to the end, from the child's present needs and tastes to his matured growth. The ground must be traveled step by step. It is always *today* in the teacher's practice. The teacher must be able to see to what *immediate and proximate use* the child's interests are to be put in order that he may be moving along the desired line, in the desired direction. The interest to scribble must be taken advantage of *now*, not in order that ten years from now he shall write beautiful letters, or do fine book-keeping, but that he may get some good of it now; may effect something which shall open another step in advance, and draw him on from his own crudity. This utilizing of interest and habit to make of it something fuller, wider, something more refined and under better control, might be defined as the teacher's whole duty. {And the teacher who always utilizes interest will never merely indulge it. Interest in its reality is a moving thing, a thing of growth, of richer experience, and fuller power. Just how to use interest to secure growth in knowledge and in efficiency is what defines the master teacher.} Here is no place to answer. But it is obvious from previous discussion that there will be a distinction according as children are mainly in the stage of direct interest, when means and end lie close together, or have reached a capacity for indirect interest, for consciously relating acts and ideas to one another, and interpreting one in terms of the other. The first, the period of elementary education, evidently requires that the child shall be taken up mainly with direct, outgoing, and positive activity, in which his impulses find fulfillment and are thereby brought to conscious value. In the second, the time of secondary education, there is basis for reflection, for conscious formulation and generalization, for the back-turned activity of the mind which goes over and con-

sciously defines and relates the elements of its experience. Here the teacher can bring the child to consciousness of the larger meaning of his own powers and experiences, not simply through giving them such outlet that the child perceives the bearings, but indirectly and vicariously through reflection upon and absorption of the experiences of others.

#### INTEREST AND DISCIPLINE.

Just because interest is an outreaching thing, a thing of growth and expansion in the realization of impulse, there can be no conflict between its genuine utilization and the securing of that power and efficiency which mark the trained mind—which constitute real “discipline.” Because interests are something that have to be *worked out* in life and not merely indulged in themselves, there is plenty of room for difficulties and obstacles which have to be overcome, and whose overcoming forms “will” and develops the flexible and firm fiber of character. To *realize* an interest means to *do* something, and in the doing resistance is met and must be faced. Only difficulties are now intrinsic; they are significant; their meaning is appreciated because they are felt in their relation to the impulse or habit to whose outworking they are relevant. Moreover, for this reason, there is motive to gird up one’s self to meet and persistently to deal with the difficulties, instead of getting discouraged at once, or half-consciously resorting to some method of evasion, or having to resort to extraneous motives of hope and fear—motives which, because external, do not train “will,” but only lead to dependence upon others.

The absurdity in much of the current conception of discipline is that it supposes (1) that unrelated difficulties, tasks that are only and merely tasks, problems that are made up to be problems, give rise to educative effort, or direction of energy; and (2) that power exists and can be trained at large apart from its application. (1) A problem is a mental thing, a psychical thing; it involves a certain mental attitude and process on the part of the one to whom it presents itself. Nothing is made really a problem by being labeled such, or because it presents itself as such to a teacher, or even because it is “hard” and repulsive. To appreciate a problem as such, the child must feel it as his own difficulty, which has arisen within and out of his own experience, as an obstacle which he has to overcome, in order to secure his own end, the integrity and fullness of his own experience. But this means that problems

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shall arise in and grow out of the child's own impulses, ideas, habits, out of his attempts to express and fulfill them — out of his efforts to realize his interests, in a word. (2) There is discipline or trained power only when there is power to use. Any other conception of "discipline" reduces it even below the level of the professional gymnastic performer — to a level of monkey tricks. If there be anyone who gives up his whole life to getting skill in the solution of charades and enigmas in the puzzle columns of magazines, puzzles which are invented *ad hoc*, just to be puzzles, he is the one who answers to much in the current notion of mental discipline. But such a conception does not need to be argued against. There is only discipline when one can put his powers economically, freely, and fully at work upon work that is intrinsically worth doing. {The failure of mathematics to fulfill its boasted function of discipline is largely due precisely just to this isolation from application. The child who juggles glibly with complex fractions may easily fail utterly at running across the simplest sort of case in actual life.} He "never had that kind before;" or he doesn't know "what rule to use." Discipline at large he has plenty and to spare; discipline in capacity to adjust his own knowledge and habits to the difficulties that arise in the natural course of experience he has little of. It would be ludicrous were it not pathetic — and often tragic. But this separation of school power and school discipline from the everyday work and requirements of the world is inevitable when it is thought to secure discipline by making up intellectual problems *per se*, instead of securing the conditions which compel them to arise in the working out of the child's own nature experience.

## CONCLUSION.

In conclusion we may say that little can be accomplished by setting up interest as an end in itself. As it is said about happiness, so with interest — it is best got when it is least consciously aimed at. The thing to do is to get at the conditions that lie back of and compel interest — the child's own powers and needs, and the instruments and materials of their realization. If we can find the child's urgent impulses and habits, if we can set them at work in a fruitful and orderly way, by supplying proper environment, we shall not need to bother much about his interests; they will mostly take care of themselves. And so, I am most firmly convinced, with the training of his "will." The fact is this supposed divorce of interest and will has its roots and

its vitality in a man-made psychology, which has erected the distinctions due to its own analytic abstractions into independent entities and faculties. Anyway we take it, there is only person — man or child — at the bottom of it all, and whatever really trains that person, which brings order and power, initiative, and intelligence into his experience, is most certainly training the will. We may safely leave it to those who believe there is a distinct somewhat named will in the human individual, outside of and apart from the active make-up and balance of the individual, to invent ways of training that will. For those who believe that will is the name given to a certain attitude and process of the whole being, to power of initiative, of persistent and intelligent adjustment of means to end, training of the will means whatever tends to growth in independence and firmness of action conjoined with sincere deliberation and reasoned insight.

## THE DISCUSSION AT JACKSONVILLE.

THE Herbart Round Table meeting at Jacksonville, Florida, February 20, 1896, was attended by a considerable company of those who had read the paper, and were much interested in the discussion. Dr. Charles DeGarmo presided.

Dr. Dewey being absent on account of sickness, C. A. McMurtry was asked to introduce the discussion by a brief statement of the points. Afterward the discussion moved on without interruption for an hour and a half. The following is a brief statement of some of the arguments offered in the discussion. This statement was submitted to Dr. Dewey, who adds a short rejoinder at the close.

The first principal criticism raised against Dr. Dewey's paper by Dr. Everest and others was that some of the terms used, such as self-activity, self-expression, and interest, are not clearly defined. It is impossible to tell just what they mean. Mr. George P. Brown suggested that a knowledge of the terminology used by Dr. Dewey in his psychology was necessary to understand this paper. Self-activity and self-expression are familiar terms in this field of thought. The child, for example, desires to realize himself in his play. The flower and the plant are the self-realization of the vital forces in the seed. Self-expression is the natural product of the activities at work in the plant and animal. Dr. Everest noticed that self-realization might be bad. A boy seeks to realize himself in evil directions, as in reading bad books.

Dr. Harris was called upon by Mr. Brown, and answered somewhat as follows: Dr. Dewey's paper was a very able production. He had read it, but was not yet fully satisfied as to its meaning. It well deserves several readings, as do all Dr. Dewey's works. He was inclined to think that Dr. Dewey had forced the situation by his interpretation of interest. He seems to have taken his standpoint from Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts*. Will is the center and core of the highest pure being. God makes a universe of freedom and evolution.

This is the interpretation of the artist's work in the God who looks down from the Sistine Chapel. Will wills will. Dr. Dewey emphasizes self-expression, and has modified this to point toward interest.



But interest points toward pleasure. Kant's criticism of Hedonism is correct forever as against interest. Pleasure is an ambiguous term, good or bad. Behind this uncertainty you can masquerade *ad libitum*. You can masquerade behind interest as an equally ambiguous term. Interest is a low thing, a high thing, and a middle thing. It is a hat that covers too many things. The good and the bad are brought together under one term. The advocates of interest should specify just what they mean under that term. Self-activity itself is a law of development only when man wills to promote the best self-activity in the world at large. Dr. Dewey is wrong in this interpretation of Kant. When the materials of instruction have been selected, it is the proper thing for the teacher to make them interesting to the children.

Dr. White thought that interest is a vague and indefinite term. Interest does not lead up to desire and motive. If interest determines the deed, how shall we dodge the conclusion that all morals break down? It is easier to act in the direction of interest, but duty sets its heel on interest in the highest concerns. This idea of interest is a soup theory. Children should not be allowed to run in the direction of their interests. In all the real efforts of life and of experience, at least, we are called upon to sacrifice pleasure to duty.

Dr. Harris remarked that Dr. White's idea was based upon the ambiguity of the meaning of interest. We should fasten on to the real aims of the child. Frank McMurry called attention to the fact that love prompts to action. Dr. White wanted to know if love had anything to do with interest. The reply was that love and interest are of the same kind, love being a more intense form of the other. Mr. Gillan wished to know if interest was present in the painful; in tooth-ache, or in the amputation of one's arm. Mr. Powell thought the effort to get rid of pain was a mediate interest. Mr. Sutton called attention to the sentence, beginning as follows: "The fact that they are repulsive indicates that we do not consider them intrinsically connected with the desired end," etc. It was further remarked that pain itself is not the source of motive. The desire for health, for the removal of pain, or any obstacle, is the real source of interest.

Mr. Treudley and Dr. Harris were drawn into a discussion of the will of man as related to the will of God, and how far the finite will is a form or expression of the infinite. Toward the close of the discussion, Charles McMurry raised the question as to the pedagogical value of interest. Those who advocate interest as a vital element in teach-

ing are charged with ambiguity, good interests and bad interests. The opponents of interest, however, reject both the good and the bad. They deny the value of interest *in toto*. They are at least as much at fault as the supporters of the theory of interest. The defenders of this theory are in no doubt as to what interests they wish to cultivate. It is the genuine, the high interests, the ideals, which they wish to promote. No one doubts this. Herbart, as a philosopher, attempted to point out six great sources of true interest, so that no one can be in doubt as to what is meant, essentially, by the advocates of interest. Moreover, all the most important terms are subject to the same ambiguity which is charged to the term interest. Will-training may be good or bad; self-activity may be good or bad; education may be good or bad; and yet we use these terms, and we understand what we mean by them.

We need an answer to this question: Shall we accept Dr. Dewey's analysis of the psychology of interest? He has given a full and masterly analysis of the natural movement involved in ideas, interest, desire, motive, and effort. Shall we accept the place and value given by Dr. Dewey to interest in the process of learning? The pedagogical problem is a simple and direct one.

Dr. Dewey, not having been able to be present at the discussion, desires to add the following to the foregoing report. "Of course, the term interest, taken without explanation or discussion, is ambiguous. If it had a meaning which was fully elaborated and universally recognized, no scientific interest would attach to further discussion. All terms which at a given time are centers of discussion have a like ambiguity. The discussion occurs precisely to clear up this ambiguity. The entire preceding paper is an attempt to discover what the genuine meaning is which must be attached to the term, on psychological grounds, and what the corollary is as to the proper educational use of interest. The analysis given and the application made may be quite out of the way, but I see no way to advance matters except to formulate and then criticise such statements. Discussions of interest, based on purely arbitrary definitions of the term, underived from any psychological analysis, are of no help; and mere complaints of the ambiguity of the word, disconnected from examination of an attempt to give its true import, leave the ambiguity just where they find it. As a basis of discussion any detailed formulation must be of use, no matter



how erroneous, and I hope the foregoing discussion may receive enough examination and criticism to help us on to a true conception of the psychical nature and educational use of interest. Cut and dried definitions are to be avoided rather than sought for in psychology; what we need is thorough analysis preceding such definitions. It may be remarked, however, that such summarizing definitions occur in the previous paper."

